

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

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DOMENICI SEEKS \$2.5 MILLION TO EXPAND ENMU-R AVIATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today revealed that he will seek committee approval for a \$2.5 million federal appropriation for Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell to expand its aviation maintenance program.

Domenici, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, is seeking \$2.5 million through the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). The funding can be used for personnel and equipment.

The Senate Appropriations Committee will consider the Domenici request when it takes up the FY2001 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill on Thursday.

"I believe ENMU-R is set to take off with an expanded aviation maintenance program that will not only allow a wide range of students to earn the skills to work within this industry, but also help New Mexico build on efforts to attract more aviation-related jobs," Domenici said. "These federal education dollars would allow the school to build up its instruction capabilities, which are vital to making the program a bigger success."

The ENMU-R aviation maintenance technology program is the only training program in New Mexico that is accredited by the Federal Aviation Administration. The program has an approved enrollment of 65 students, but "is poised to accommodate additional students if it can provide the necessary personnel and equipment," Domenici said.

Domenici is actively working with Roswell and Chaves County officials, as well as ENMU-R personnel, to support the ENMU-R aviation maintenance program. Because there is an ongoing lack of qualified aircraft maintenance workers available, Domenici believes the two-year college is entering into a growth market.

"Growth in the aviation industry has created a substantial shortage of trained FAA-certified airframe and power plant mechanics," Domenici said. "I'm working to convince my colleagues that

ENMU-R has a program that is attracting minorities, women and economically-disadvantaged students who will ultimately benefit from this investment in their education and training.”

In other areas, Domenici is continuing his effort to help acquire surplus military or government aircraft for the ENMU-R training program.

The Senate and House are trying to complete all 13 of the FY2001 appropriations bills to fund the federal government by the Oct. 1 start of the 2001 fiscal year.